



# *PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT*

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MEETING DATE: MARCH 28, 2012

ITEM NUMBER: 10c

**SUBJECT:** TREE REMOVAL REQUEST AT 729 16<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012  
**FROM:** PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT / MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION  
**PRESENTATION BY:** BRUCE A. HARTLEY, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER  
**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** BRUCE A. HARTLEY AT (714) 754-5123

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## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Deny the request from the Costa Mesa Sanitary District for the removal of one Cajeput Tree growing in the public right-of-way at 729 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 23, 2012, the Public Services Director received a request from Scott Carroll, General Manager, Costa Mesa Sanitary District (Applicant) requesting the Parks and Recreation Commission to consider the removal of City owned parkway tree located at 729 16<sup>th</sup> Street (Attachment 1). The request was the result of a recent video inspection of the District's main sewer line in 16<sup>th</sup> Street, which documented root intrusion, as shown in the photograph in Attachment 1.

## **ANALYSIS**

The parkway tree is a Cajeput Tree, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. It is growing in an approximately four foot by six foot (4' x 6') cut-out in the ten foot (10') wide sidewalk. The tree is approximately thirty feet (30') in height and has a trunk diameter of sixteen inches (16"). It is in 'good' condition. It was last pruned in March 2011. The tree has not been root pruned previously, according to a check of available records. See Attachment 2. The sidewalk is uplifted approximately one inch (1") at the curb face, but is otherwise in good condition. See Attachment 3.

The tree does not meet the criteria for a 'Health and Safety' removal, as current Departmental policy only allows for removal of a parkway tree when it is shown to be intruding into a lateral sewer line within ten feet (10') horizontally from the tree. The sewer line in question is a main sewer line in the street.

The site was inspected by the City Arborist and the Maintenance Services Manager. What was most notable to both staff members was the number of private property trees growing in the same vicinity as the City tree; many with observable surface roots causing damage to concrete improvements. There are nine trees in the planter immediately adjacent to the City parkway tree.

Due to the high number of private property trees within the immediate area surrounding the City tree, it is staff's determination that it would be difficult to make the assumption that removing one

tree would solve the problem of a main sewer line that has failing joints. It is staff's recommendation that the District either mechanically or chemically remove the roots and re-line the sewer main to insure that sewage does not leak into adjacent soil from the failing pipe.

The Applicant has been notified of the meeting and has been sent a copy of the agenda and this report.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

1. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.1 – Health and Safety Removal. The City would remove the tree at no cost to the Applicant. The City would replant a new tree at the same location if directed to do so by the Commission.
2. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 – Discretionary Removals, which would require the replacement of the tree with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree and two (2) fifteen gallon-size trees to be planted elsewhere on City property. The applicant would pay all removal and replacement costs.

If approved by the Commission, the tree must be removed and mitigation trees, or the equivalent monetary value, be provided to the City within one year from the date of final approval, after which the approval expires.

## **FISCAL REVIEW**

There would be no fiscal impact to the City if the request to remove the tree was either denied or if it is approved as a Discretionary Removal, as the applicant would pay all costs.

If the Commission approves the removal as a Health and Safety Removal, the City's cost for the removal of the tree would be \$263.50. The cost for the replacement of the tree would be \$95.50.

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

No legal review is required for this item.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Cajeput Tree growing in the public right-of-way at 729 16<sup>th</sup> Street is not currently causing any observable damage to either public or private property, other than a minor lift in concrete sidewalk. Based on field observations of the subject tree and other private property trees in the vicinity, it cannot be concluded that the subject tree is the cause of the root intrusion in the CMSD main sewer line. It is a unique situation that does not necessarily meet the criteria required to allow for staff to approve its removal. In the absence of conclusive evidence that the City tree is the cause of root intrusion and that its removal would solve the problem, staff recommends that the Commission deny the request.

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BRUCE A. HARTLEY  
Maintenance Services Manager

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RAJA SETHURAMAN  
Acting Director, Public Services Department

ATTACHMENTS: 1. [Letter Requesting Commission Consider Tree Removal](#)  
2. [Tree Information](#)  
3. [Photographs](#)

C: Scott Carroll, General Manager  
Costa Mesa Sanitary District  
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